

JANE JACOBS & THE BATTLE FOR NEW YORK'S SOUL, PAGE 13

THE INDYPENDENT

ISSUE #113, DECEMBER 6, 2007 – JANUARY 9, 2008
A FREE PAPER FOR FREE PEOPLE

THE PALESTINE PEACE CHARADE

Why the Conflict Goes On and On

Fareed Taamallah, Jeff Halper
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**BLOCKADING THE
WAR MACHINE,** page 5



**HARLEM
TENANTS
DIG IN FOR
LONG FIGHT**
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NEW YORK CITY INDEPENDENT MEDIA CENTER

E-MAIL
imc-nyc-print@indymedia.org

WEB
indypendent.org
NYC: nyc.indymedia.org
U.S.: us.indymedia.org
GLOBAL: indymedia.org

MAIL
P.O. Box 1417
NY, NY 10276

PHONE
212-221-0521

WHAT IS INDYMEDIA?

With autonomous chapters in more than 150 cities throughout the world, the Independent Media Center (IMC) is an international network of volunteer media activists.

The IMC seeks to create a new media ethic by providing progressive, in-depth and accurate coverage of issues. We are a community-based organization using media to facilitate political and cultural self-representation. We seek to analyze issues affecting individuals, communities and ecosystems by providing media tools and space to those seeking to communicate. We espouse open dialogue and placing the means of communication and creativity back in the hands of the people, away from the drive of profit.

The Independent is funded by benefits, subscriptions, donations, grants and ads from organizations and individuals with similar missions.

WHAT CAN I DO TO GET INVOLVED?

The IMC has an open door. You can write and distribute for *The Independent*, videotape events and rallies, update the website, self-publish articles to the web, take photos or just help us run the office. As an organization relying on volunteer support, we encourage all forms of participation.

The print team reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity. We welcome your participation in the editorial process.

VOLUNTEER STAFF:

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community calendar

Please send event announcements to indyevents@gmail.com

The next editorial meeting for *The Independent* is Tuesday, Dec. 11, 7pm, 4 W. 43rd St., Suite 311. All are welcome.

SATURDAY, DEC. 8

1pm • Free
PROTEST: “DABKE VS. DIAMONDS.” Dance against the destruction of communities by Israeli diamond mogul Lev Leviev. “You’re glitz! You’re glam! You’re stealing Palestinian land!” Leviev’s new NYC jewelry store, 700 Madison Ave (btw. 62nd & 63rd sts.). Sponsors: Adalah-NY: Coalition for Justice in the Middle East & Palestine Liberation Dance Troupe. Info: JusticeME@gmail.com • mideastjustice.org.

MONDAY, DEC. 10

4pm • Free
INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY PROTEST. Protest preparations for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Chinese Consulate, 520 12th Ave (at W 42nd St.)

7pm • Free
DISCUSSION: TO RESIST OR NOT TO RESIST: COMMUNITY DISCUSSION ON POLICE VIOLENCE & BYSTANDER RESPONSE. “If you see something, say something” — What about when you see police violence against people of color? Discussion, basis for Freedom Train playwrights’ work. Audre Lorde Project, 85 S. Oxford St., Fort Greene, B’klyn • 718-596-0342 alpinfo@alp.org • alp.org

TUESDAY, DEC. 11

7-9pm • Free
FILMS: AIDS ‘JAAGO’ PROJECT. Four short films by cutting-edge Indian directors that aim to dismantle myths and misconceptions about HIV/AIDS. Produced by Mira Nair, acclaimed director of *Monsoon Wedding* and *The Namesake*. Each film comes from a different region of India and presents a new perspective on life with the disease. Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Film Center at NYU, 36 E 8th St. SVP events@nyc.mercycorps.org.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 12

6:30 - 8:30pm • Free
WORKSHOP: START A PEACE GROUP IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD! Providing training and resources to people who want to start a peace group in their neighborhood (school, house of worship, etc.)

UFPJ office, 630 9th Ave., Suite 216, between W 44th & 45th sts. • 212-868-5545 RSVP.ufpjnyc@unitedforpeace.org

THURSDAY, DEC. 13

7:30pm • donation
TOY DRIVE: A HOLIDAY SPECTACULAR. The Black Cotton Foundation and The Safiya-Nuh Foundation are asking for every person in the community to donate a new toy for the holiday party that both organizations will host for the underprivileged children of the community at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Labor Center. The 40/40 Club, 6 W 25th St. (718) 415-0523 • (347) 679-7832

6-7pm • Free
VIGIL: REMEMBER NYC FAMILIES SEPARATED BY CURRENT IMMIGRATION POLICY. Interfaith candlelight vigil to hold light to these mothers, fathers & children & decry their suffering. Sponsors: NYC New Sanctuary Coalition, Families for Freedom, Greater NY Labor-Religion Coalition. ICE Varick St. Service Processing Center, 201 Varick St. (at Houston St.) • Info: Rachel Soltis, 212-477-0351 • newyorknewsanctuarymovement@gmail.com

FRIDAY, DEC. 14

7pm • Free
WORLD WAR 3 MAGAZINE RELEASE PARTY. Party for the latest issue of *World War 3* magazine, with slide shows and spoken-word performances by radical cartoonists Seth Tobocman, Mac McGill, Fly, Rebecca Migdal, and Christopher Cardinale and music by the Improvised Explosive Devices. Time’s Up!, 49 E Houston St. worldwar3illustrated.org

SATURDAY, DEC. 15

7pm-2am • \$10 suggested donation
EVENT/AUCTION: ¡SALSA FOR FREEDOM 2007! Proceeds go to the commissary of the Puerto Rican political prisoners. Join us for a night of amazing music, non-stop dancing, and delicious Puerto Rican food, and bring your checkbook for the annual Freedom Auction!! St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, 521 W. 126th St. (btw. Amsterdam Ave. and Broadway) • prolibertad@hotmail.com • 718-601-4751

reader comments



SUBMIT COMMENTS ONLINE AT INDYPENDENT.ORG.

AN ATTACK ON DISSENT, RED, GREEN AND OTHERWISE

Responses to “Bringing the War on Terrorism Home: Congress Considers How to ‘Disrupt’ Radical Movements in the United States” and “History’s Terrorists,” Nov. 16

Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) voted for this. These hacks should be run out of office. It passed in the House 404 to 6, 22 choosing not to vote although present, under “suspension of the rules,” which is the way they handle emergency funding for natural disasters that require immediate action.



GOODBYE TO ALL THAT: Carlitos Cafe and Galeria closing party Nov. 29. The bar/gallery/activist space, which opened in 2003, lost its lease on Lexington Ave at East 113th St. and is currently looking for another space in East Harlem in which to reopen. Contact Eliana Godoy, carlitoseliana@yahoo.com. PHOTO: FRANK REYNOSO

MONDAY, DEC. 17

7pm • Free
PRISONER HOLIDAY CARD WRITING & OPEN HOUSE. Annual gathering to send holiday wishes to Death Row prisoners across the U.S. and to New York prisoners. Refreshments. At Hunter College, Thomas Hunter, Rm. 305, 68th St. & Lexington Ave. Sponsor: Campaign to End the Death Penalty (CEDP). Info: 347-853-2758, nyc@nodeathpenalty.org nodeathpenalty.org

MONDAY, DEC. 17

8-10pm
JAZZ MEANS PEACE. A jazz series dedicated to building a permanent alternative peace culture by supporting peace organizations and celebrating America’s unique classical musical art form Bowery Poetry Club, 308 Bowery (at Bleecker St.) • 212-614-0505

THURSDAY, DEC. 20

6:30pm • Free
DISCUSSION: “A SOLDIER’S STORY: WRITINGS BY A REVOLUTIONARY

NEW AFRICAN ANARCHIST.” Kuwasi Balagoon, one of the Panther 21; subsequently a member of the Black Liberation Army. Open to all, no prior knowledge expected. Earth Matters Cafe, 177 Ludlow St. Sponsor: NY Metro Alliance of Anarchists (NYMAA) Reading Group.

MONDAY, DEC. 31

10:30pm • Free
RIDE: 10TH ANNUAL NEW YEAR’S EVE PARTY RIDE. Start the year off right — on your bike or skates! Come celebrate New Year’s Eve in the great outdoors. We’ll be riding up to Belvedere Castle in the middle of Central Park for the best New Year’s Eve dance party in town! Dress festive — don’t forget your noisemakers and party favors and bring food and drink to share! Washington Square Park, under the arch. Timesup.org

Next Issue: January 10, 2008

If this legislation passes — if you write a letter to the editor, show up at a protest, demonstrate nonviolently, or use the Internet to communicate with other activists — you can be considered a “homegrown terrorist” and treated as an “enemy combatant.” It is aimed to quiet the voice of dissent, and it was introduced by Democrats and overwhelmingly voted for by Democrats.

—SARAH P.

This legislation is really designed to attack communist and anarchist revolutionary organizations that are dedicated to

empowering the working class to take hold of that which the bosses steal from us. The bourgeoisie are updating their laws to make sure that they can use the full force of their state apparatus to attack those who will smash that state once and for all. Let’s make sure to keep the fact that this society fears social revolution at the forefront of discussions on this “disruption of radical organizations.” They fear us for good reason, for we are their undoing.

—RED REVOLUTION

Continued on Page 15

Middle East Showdown in Union Square



NEITHER RAIN NOR SNOW: Bernie McFall of Palestine Action at Union Square East has been participating in the group’s weekly vigil for more than two years. PHOTO: K. CYR

BY CLÉMENTINE GALLOT

Every Saturday afternoon amid shoppers, skaters, tourists and passers-by at Union Square, a small group supporting Palestinian self-determination and an even smaller pro-Israel group face off on a small patch of land across from Virgin Megastore on 14th Street.

One Saturday this fall, a Brooklyn teacher, a French professor at Sarah Lawrence College, two former Marines and several retirees stood around a large yellow “Free Palestine” banner. Holding signs and pictures, they handed out flyers that read, “Israel commits war crimes.”

“People see a point of view here that they don’t see anywhere else,” said Marcia Bernstein, 72, a retiree from Brooklyn, who participates in the vigil every week with her husband, Murray. The couple say they stand in support of the Palestinian people and in opposition to the illegal Israeli occupation of the land. “What is being done [to the Palestinians] is against all Jewish values,” said Bernstein, whose parents escaped the pogroms in Russia. “Jews have always stood for justice.”

The couple said they have witnessed several friendships break up over disagreements about the conflict. “Israel is held above sacrosanct,” Bernstein says.

Palestine Action at Union Square East (PAUSE), with no more than 30 members, has met every week since 2002 — even in

winter. The group spontaneously organized after meeting at demonstrations by the peace network Women in Black.

Although passers-by often ignore the small protest, the gathering also sparks debate and provokes everything from thumbs up to insults and spitting. The pictures of Israeli atrocities and signs especially trigger angry reactions; cries of “assholes!” and “bullshit!” can be heard frequently.

A shopper passing by with a friend shouts: “There is no Palestine, you guys don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“The Palestinians have the right to resist occupation!” a member of PAUSE shouts back. “You speak like a fascist!” says the young man before taking off.

“There is so much Israeli propaganda in the U.S. press,” laments Ann Roos, a Brooklyn schoolteacher who was hit in the face during a PAUSE protest last year. However, she believes that more and more people are beginning to understand the issue. And even though some people yell at them, the protesters’ presence has provoked some interesting discussions.

A man in his mid-20s carrying a Filene’s Basement bag approaches the group and asks gently, “Was there ever a Palestinian state? I’m confused, can you explain?”

A young man on his bike stops by the group: “I’m Jewish, I support the state of Israel, even if I don’t like what they do,” he says.

One heckler, a motorcyclist, yells from the

street, “Israel will rule the world because the Bible says so!” The PAUSE members laugh: “Now we need a good psychiatrist.”

A couple of feet away, two elderly men lead a small counter-protest, giving away unlabeled literature, such as a flier titled “Racism in the Islamic World,” and flyers for FLAME (Facts and Logic about the Middle East), a pro-Israel advocacy group. They say PAUSE has unnecessarily called the police 11 times, accusing the pro-Israel group of disruption. They also claim some of its members are openly anti-Semitic.

While the range of opinions varies within PAUSE, Bernstein dismisses claims of anti-Semitism. “It’s ridiculous,” she said, “Israel is a state, it’s led by a militaristic right-wing government, and you can criticize it.”

Caught between the two groups in the middle of a heated argument, a man and a woman reading flyers came together: “Israel, Burma, Africa, it goes on,” says the man, shaking his head. “I agree that Israel has a strong lobby ... but so does China,” says the woman, “the world is spiraling.”

Diamonds are a Settler’s Best Friend



BOYCOTT LEVIEV: Demonstrators chanting, “You’re glitz, you’re glam, you’re stealing Palestinian land” boycotted the Nov. 13 opening of Levie’s, a Madison Avenue jewelry store owned by Israel-based billionaire Lev Leviev. The protest was led by Adalah-NY: The Coalition for Justice in the Middle East, a New-York based group formed in July 2006 in response to Israeli aggression against Lebanon. Adalah-NY says that Levie’s, the 210th richest man in the world according to *Forbes*, is a barrier to the Middle East peace process because he funds illegal settlements on Palestinian land, threatening the livelihood of Palestinian farmers. PHOTO: ADALAH-NY

Check out *The Independent’s*
New Blog!

Independent writers are now blogging. Visit independent.org for updates from Jessica Lee on the Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act, A.K. Gupta on the Iraq War, media analysis from Chris Anderson, scenes from the presidential primaries and more!

Harlem Tenants Fight Yuppie Takeover

By JOHN O’HAGAN

Built in the late fifties, the Delano Houses have historically been a bastion of affordable housing for the working class of Harlem. The seven buildings of the Delano houses contain 1,800 apartments, spread over the three blocks between 139th and 142nd streets and Fifth Avenue and Malcolm X Boulevard. The famed Savoy Ballroom used to be located here, the jazz-era Cotton Club was just around the corner, and King Tim III — whose “Personality Jock” predated “Rapper’s Delight” as the first hip-hop record — grew up there.

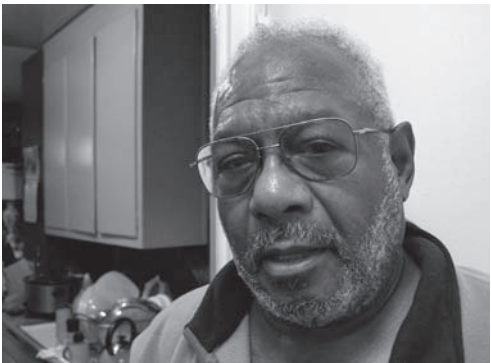
land property here in Harlem has gone up drastically,” says Dolina Duzant, who was raised in Brooklyn and has lived in Delano Village since 1985.

Tenants of Delano Village have begun to organize to combat the looming gentrification. Guided by the Harlem Tenants Council, two protests have occurred. The first, on Oct. 24, was in front of the Vantage offices at Lexington Avenue and 59th Street, and drew about 35 tenants. The second, on Nov. 3 in front of the Credit Suisse offices on Madison Avenue and 24th Street, targeted Savoy Park’s financiers. The event had a smaller crowd but caused more of an effect. “Going to Credit Suisse was something that

— no verbal notification, no new lease,” he says — took the matter to Housing Court. The court ruled in his favor, so Vantage decided that they would not renew his lease, and stated that his primary residence was in Orlando, Florida. Evans had cosigned the mortgage for his cousin on a house in Orlando, but had never lived in it; he has occupied his apartment in Delano Village since 2004. That case is now in court.

“You have people who have been living here for years, and getting notices that say that ‘we are not going to renew your lease because we don’t believe that you are the primary tenant of this apartment,’” explains Duzant, “These people are fifty,

got a visit from an agent from Phat Crib International Realty, who wanted to show his apartment to a young couple. “On May 20, around 3:30, my doorbell rang, and by the time I answered it, someone had put in a key and was opening the door,” Marshal says. He found out that “the management gave [the agent] the key.” The agent told Marshal that he had made a mistake, and wanted to enter the apartment that was adjacent to his, which is vacant. “If he knew the apartment was vacant, why did he ring the doorbell?” Marshal asks. Marshal phoned his management about the real-estate agent, who explained that it was simply a mistake.



HOME IS WHERE THE BATTLE IS. Left to right are Dolina Duzant, Valerie Orridge and George Evans, all are tenants of Savoy Park who have faced harassment from Vantage Properties and are fighting back. PHOTOS: K. CYR

Vantage Properties, in partnership with Apollo Real Estate Advisors, acquired the housing complex from Axelrod Management in March 2006 and quickly renamed it Savoy Park. It is hard to miss the flags along 139th Street emblazoned with the advertising slogan “hip and historic.” The savoyparknyc.com website flashes slides of the Apollo Theater and barbecue-joint awnings over a funky jazz-fusion soundtrack.

But Vantage has been trying to market the complex to a demographic very different from the people who have lived in Harlem for the last century. One-bedroom apartments there now rent for about \$1,700; two-bedroom homes are advertised at \$2,350.

According to Nellie Hester Bailey, co-founder of the Harlem Tenants Association, Vantage plans to drive out the current tenants, most of whom are elderly and live in rent-stabilized apartments. Bailey argues Vantage wants to “move to condo units, which turns into a higher income bracket, and rent to an ethnic group that is not African-American.” Once an apartment is vacated, landlords can legally slap on hefty rent increases for new renovations. Add to that the state’s weak enforcement of laws against rent-gouging, and landlords can raise rents substantially by emptying rent-stabilized apartments. If the rent on a vacant apartment reaches \$2,000, it’s completely deregulated.

Vantage Properties was founded in 2005 and since then has acquired a impressive portfolio of residential and commercial properties in Manhattan and Queens. “What we’re focused on — what we think we can really do — is create a very, very high-quality product for the middle-income consumer,” Vantage CEO Neil Rubler told the *New York Times* last year. Last July, Apollo Real Estate partner James Simmons told the *New York Daily News* that the loss of affordable housing in the region “creates an intriguing investment opportunity.”

Real-estate developers are heading uptown in swarms to take advantage of the new housing market in Harlem, the southernmost neighborhood in Manhattan that is still predominantly working-class. “The

they were not happy about,” says tenant activist Valerie Orridge.

Another protest at Vantage is in the works. “We plan to go back before Christmas,” says Orridge.

Tenants’ biggest complaint is that the landlords are waging a campaign of harassment against them. Many tenants were offered \$10,000 or more to move out. The ones who refused have often had problems renewing their leases, which is supposed to be automatic for rent-stabilized tenants unless the landlords have a legal reason to evict them.

One common tactic that Vantage has employed is claiming that tenants’ primary residence is elsewhere, even for those who have lived in the complex for decades. Early this year, George Evans, 73, discovered that Vantage had raised his rent by \$176.74 without notifying him. “Just came out of the blue,” he says. Vantage claimed that it was part of the new lease that he had signed. Evans, who had not signed a new lease

sixty, seventy years old and are living on fixed incomes.”

“I cannot go back to work, I live on a fixed income,” says Lewis Hall, a resident since 1969, who has also been accused of having a primary residence elsewhere.

Another common complaint is the buildings’ state of disrepair. “They put in a second-hand carpet in the hallways,” says Bailey. “We think that is what caused the bug problem.” Vantage’s office refused to respond to inquiries by *The Independent* for comment.

Under the previous landlords, tenants say, repairs would occur quickly. Now repairs are simply left undone. “[The former landlords] were excellent. Before anything was wrong, they would fix it before you hung up the phone,” Evans explains. “These people never show up, they never call you back.”

Security is another problem. James Marshal, 43, who was born and raised in Delano Village, was in his apartment when he

“Less than three weeks later, someone else entered a key [in my door],” says Marshal. He opened the door and found a Latina woman who said she had been sent by the management to clean his apartment. He phoned the management again, and they explained that the woman did not speak English well and had gotten the apartment number wrong. Marshal then sent a letter to the Vantage office complaining that they had no right to hand out keys to his apartment to whomever they want.

He has yet to receive a reply. “This is not a hotel, it is where I live,” he says. “It was an unlawful entry.”

“What is winning here?” asks Duzant. “Having the tenants not allow Vantage to come in and do whatever they want to do. We want to see proof, we want to know what’s going on, we want to see everything.”

Steve Wishnia contributed to this article.

WHERE DO I GET MY COPY OF *THE INDEPENDENT*?

A FREE PAPER FOR FREE PEOPLE

BELOW 14TH ST.

Bluestockings
172 Allen St.

Times Up!
49 E. Houston

Housing Works
126 Crosby St.

Mercer St. Books
206 Mercer

Jefferson Market
Branch Library
Sixth Ave & 10th St

LES Credit Union
37 Ave. B

Kim’s Video
6 St. Mark’s Place

Brecht Forum
451 West St.

The New School
(Student Lounge)
55 W. 13th St.

Theatre for the New City
155 First Ave.

14TH TO 96TH ST.

Manhattan Neighborhood
Network
537 W. 59th St.

Housing Conservation
Coordinators
777 Tenth Ave.

Revolution Books
9 W. 19th St.

Chelsea Sq. Diner
23rd & Ninth Ave.

ABOVE 96TH ST.

Kim’s Video
114th St. & Broadway

Labyrinth Books
536 W. 112th St.

Hue Man Books
2319 Frederick Douglass

Julia de Burgos
Cultural Center
E. 106th St. & Lexington

Uptown Sister’s Bookstore
156th & Amsterdam

Karrot
181 St. & Ft. Wash Ave

BROOKLYN

Brooklyn Museum
200 Eastern Pkwy

Brooklyn Acad. of Music
30 Lafayette Ave.

Vox Pop
1022 Cortelyou Rd.

Tillie’s of Brooklyn
248 DeKalb Ave.

Phoebe’s Café
323 Graham Ave.

Veggie Castle
2242 Church Ave.

Pillow Cafe
505 Myrtle Ave.

Ozzie’s Coffee Shop
249 5th Ave.
57 7th Ave.

Verb Café
Bedford Ave. & N. 5th St.

El Loco Burrito
345 Graham Ave.
243 Bushwick Ave.

Tea Lounge
Union St. & 7th Ave.
9th St. & 7th Ave.

The Archive
49 Bogart St.

Pacific Street Library
25 4th Ave.

QUEENS

Terraza Café
40-19 Glean St, Elmhurst

Café Aubergine
49-22 Skillman Ave,
Flushing

BRONX

The Point
940 Garrison Ave.

Mothers on the Move
928 Intervale St.

STATEN ISLAND

St. George Library
5 Central Ave.

Port Richmond
Branch Library
75 Bennett St.

Everything Goes
Book Café
208 Bay St.

JERSEY CITY

Fve Corners Library
678 Newark Ave.

The Heights
Branch Library
14 Zariskie St.

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Bodies on the Line

HUNDREDS DELAY MILITARY SHIPMENTS IN OLYMPIA

BY AUSTIN KELLY

In early November, protesters in Olympia, Wash., were attacked and arrested by police as they put their bodies in the path of military convoys returning from Iraq. I was lucky to have scheduled my visit home to Olympia for early November and was able to participate in these antiwar actions.

Prior to my arrival, peace activists in our close-knit and progressive community had learned that a ship transporting combat vehicles from the 3rd Brigade Stryker Combat Team was returning from Iraq and would soon be docking at the port. Its cargo would then be hauled to nearby Fort Lewis. With only a few days to pull together a plan, OlyPMR (Olympia Port Militarization Resistance), a group previously formed to respond to this situation,

and skin from chemical weapons to stand up for what they believed in.

In one action, a daring group of six college freshmen, all new to civil disobedience, “locked down,” i.e. wired their wrists together to make it more difficult for police to move them. They encased their arms in PVC pipe, then walked as a group into the path of a moving Stryker convoy. Police arrived on the scene and without any warning, at close range, shot each of the activists with pepper-spray projectiles (“pepper rounds”). These rounds are extremely painful and cause temporary blindness. The police then used circular saws to cut through the PVC pipe.

The unforgettable night of Nov. 13 began with a mass action by the OlyPMR Women Caucus, a women’s coalition united around a plan of civil disobedience.

rush of adrenaline kicked in, overriding my fear. I strode in front of the speeding tank, but it plowed forward in an attempt to drive me from the roadway. To show the driver that I meant business, I kneeled down. He slammed on the brakes, and the convoy screeched to a halt. In less than a minute an officer with a baton approached and pushed me to the side of the road.

Even so, the convoy couldn’t move forward because close to a hundred others had joined me. Only when the police attacked en masse, using pepper spray and concussion grenades, was the convoy able to depart.

Activists involved in the demonstration reported many positive gestures from the troops, such as a “thumbs up” as they drove by in their Strykers. In one memorable incident, a non-commissioned



FROM PROTEST TO RESISTANCE: (Left to right) Antiwar activists hand-in-hand form a human blockade at the Port of Olympia, Wash., in front of a convoy transporting military shipments Nov. 13. Later that night, 39 women faced off with police officers in riot gear to continue the effort to blockade the transport of military equipment returning from Iraq to nearby Fort Lewis. All 39 were arrested.
PHOTOS: PHOEBE BLANDING (LEFT) AND ROB WHITLOCK (RIGHT)

sprang into action.

By the time I arrived in Olympia on Nov. 7, the military freighter had been docked at the port and had begun to unload its implements of war. Throughout the night and continuing into the morning, one convoy after another attempted to leave the Port of Olympia while dozens of protesters blocked the roadway with their bodies. In each case the convoys eventually passed, but only after police shoved demonstrators, striking many with batons and dragging others across the asphalt. At 2:30a.m., police attacked 20 nonviolent protesters with pepper spray. Two were arrested.

Inspired by the protest, one soldier walked away from his military duties that night and publicly declared his opposition to the war.

I was extremely moved by the courage and commitment of the demonstrators. Night after night, the mostly young protesters endured the cold and lack of sleep, bruises from billy clubs and burning eyes

Thirty-nine mostly college-aged women sat down on the cold pavement to block the war machines. With bright lights shining into their eyes and police looming over them in full SWAT team regalia, they chanted “No weapons on my body! We are nonviolent!” over and over again.

As news cameras whirled, the police dragged them one by one across the rough pavement to a waiting police bus, this time without the use of chemical agents or billy clubs.

All 39 were arrested.

While all eyes were on the women being arrested, a flurry of activity broke out at a side entrance to the port. Police and their patrol cars were surrounding a small contingent of protesters, and a convoy of Strykers was making its exit at a rapid speed. I was standing close by and faced with a sudden opportunity to act. A

officer in desert combat fatigues got out of his car, came over to a group of us on a street corner, shook each of our hands and told us, “I just want to thank you people for what you’re doing.”

He told us that he had been deployed to Iraq twice before and found it to be a “hopeless mess.” He said that he and many other soldiers wished that they could speak out, but that military regulations prohibited them from publicly opposing the war. Forty-eight of his comrades in the Stryker Brigade had been killed in Iraq.

OlyPMR has received messages of solidarity from people from around the world, including New York City. Similar actions in other locales are currently being planned.

For more information and photographs, visit Olympia Movement for Justice and Peace: omjp.org.

Student Antiwar Walkouts Spark Small Town Backlash

BY JENNIFER KLINE

In protest of the Iraq War and military recruitment in their schools, an estimated 1,000 high school students walked out of classrooms in at least a dozen towns and cities across western Washington state Nov. 16. In Seattle, more than 400 students marched through the downtown, chanting antiwar slogans.

Organized by members of the national antiwar group Youth Against War and Racism, the event was just one of a growing number of student-led antiwar walkouts that have recently taken place in high schools across the country.

In Tukwila, Wash., a town of 17,000 people just south of Seattle where more than two-thirds of the school district’s students qualify for free or reduced-cost lunches, 150 students walked out of Foster High School, chanting “Money for schools, not war.” The students marched from the school to the town’s City Hall, where they held a peaceful rally.

“We were planning only to walk across the street but we decided to walk the extra mile to City Hall,” said Bailey Davidson, who participated in the walkout.

The student-led antiwar action created a controversy in Tukwila, after the high school principal and district superintendent reprimanded six teachers for participating in the walkout, alleging misconduct.

Social studies teacher Brett Rogers was placed on paid administrative leave for more than a week for leaving the campus during the walkout, while five other teachers were threatened with administrative penalties.

In response, hundreds of phone calls and emails flooded the school board and more than 100 supporters rallied outside a packed school board meeting held on Nov. 27.

“What really opened my eyes today about how big this has gotten is when I heard that the school board has received emails and phone calls from seven different countries and 22 different states,” said Tiffany Williams, a sophomore at Foster.

However, along with supporters, there were at least four police cars on the site of the board meeting. “There were more police officers there than when we have a bomb threat at our school,” noted Williams.

Though Rogers was allowed to return to campus on Nov. 28, students claim the administration is now cracking down on their organizing.

“Every time we try to organize something they call the cops,” said Davidson, who reported that students were forced to meet off campus after the school administration sent police officers to intimidate students who were organizing on campus. “Now, we keep it on the down-low; we try to keep the admin out of it.”

“Tukwila has no history of anything like this,” said Tom McCarthy, who is an organizer with the Tukwila Teachers and Students Solidarity Committee, which was formed by community members to protest the crackdown on teachers. “What is happening in Tukwila can be viewed as a spark or a challenge for the nation.”

“Tukwila is a small town that I didn’t have that much hope for until this began ... It’s amazing to see what has happened this week,” said Davidson.

The Theater of the Absurd

Headlines Focus on Candidate Branding While Debate Centers on the Irrelevant

By A. K. GUPTA

The presidential race is about many things: money, branding, celebrity, the media and theatrics. The one thing it's not about is politics.

Going into 2008, there are six major issues confronting the United States: the Iraq War and the "war on terror," global warming, health care, immigration, the deteriorating economy, and the expanding police state. Not one of them will be substantively addressed during the next year.

There will be a lot of screeching about immigration and terrorism when the general election gets under way and the Republicans play the fear and terror cards, but no intelligent discussion.

Don't look to the mainstream media for this. They will obsessively deconstruct the semiotics of hairdos and outfits, facial expressions and body language, but will skip on discussing real policies that might address these pressing issues.

It's a theater of the absurd. Even as political issues increasingly become a question of life and death, the national stage-managed debate shrinks from them equally fast.

Look at the presidential campaign, which has turned into a two-year death march from its start after the November 2006 elections. First was speculation over who would run.

Clowning Around



SANE CLOWN POSSE: Students at the University of California at Santa Barbara, along with members of the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army, chase a visiting CIA recruiter (center) from campus Nov. 14. The confrontation started during a CIA recruitment and information meeting when four students began demonstrating "waterboarding," an interrogation practice that simulates drowning and has been used by the CIA on prisoners in Guantánamo, Afghanistan and elsewhere. According to reports in the campus newspaper, *Daily Nexus*, the student demonstrators tied a volunteer to a table and poured water over his face. Moments later, members of the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army charged into the room and held a press conference. "People got on tables, chairs were overturned and the projector screen was rolled up," reported the San Francisco-based Indybay website. The CIA recruiter quickly fled the room and was hurried off campus to cries of "C-I-A, Go Away!"

PHOTO: UCSB SAW, INDYBAY.ORG

Then the contest was to secure high-profile consultants, pollsters, campaign managers, spokespeople and bloggers, followed by jockeying for celebrity endorsements — Oprah for Obama, Chuck Norris for Mike Huckabee, the Osmonds for Mitt Romney, Bonnie Raitt for John Edwards and about half of Hollywood for Hillary Clinton.

The most ludicrous stage, a media creation, is the "money primary": the race to connect with wealthy donors to generate the heftiest quarterly fundraising totals. In this second Gilded Age of America, a candidate must have the golden seal of the moneyed elite to be considered "serious."

Thus, before voters cast a single ballot in any primary, the presidential field has been winnowed to those who could pass these hurdles. The serious Democratic candidates, as the mainstream media defines it, are Clinton, Edwards and Barack Obama.

There is a dime's worth of difference between them. None promises a full withdrawal from Iraq by 2013. None endorses single-payer health care, the only real solution. All three favor unproven and corruption-prone "cap-and-trade" mechanisms to combat global warming, rather than strictly regulating pollutants at the source. All are largely quiet on immigration, trying to pander simultaneously to corporate need for cheap labor, a populist storm of jingoism and the power of the Hispanic vote.

On the Republican side, the field is more open, but all the candidates are lunatics. Almost without exception they compete to show who hates immigrants the most, who will ban abortion the fastest, who will bomb Iran the fiercest, who will waterboard the most terrorists and who will stay the course in Iraq the longest.

For candidates on both sides, political vision is about branding. Obama is brand hope; Clinton is brand leadership; Rudy Giuliani is brand 9/11; Huckabee is brand Christian Right; and Romney is brand whatever-red-meat-conservatives-are feeding-on at the moment.

Political tactics are for damaging the brand identity. Clinton's opponents seized her wavering response over supporting driver's licenses for illegal immigrants to remind voters she has no beliefs other than what the latest polls or her biggest donors tell her. Not that the other Democrats, except perhaps Dennis Kucinich, have a coherent plan beyond buzzwords like "enforcement," "secure borders," "guest workers" and "path to citizenship."

Edwards has turned the head of many a progressive because he actually talks policy, but he's playing a well-known role. Lacking the party machine backing Clinton and the media hagiography illuminating Obama, Edwards packages himself as an issues man, which is what Jerry Brown did in the 1992 race and Howard Dean in 2004. Talking politics means talking about how corporations and the upper class — the ones who fund presidential campaigns — plunder the government. This means that issues candidates can become contenders but never winners, because they lack money to buy huge blocks of television advertising.

So most candidates choose to avoid politics and concentrate on branding to

create a product that fulfills the emotional needs of a public that looks to shopping as the cure-all for any ill. (Hollywood and an educational mythology that reduces history to the deeds of great individuals also give support to political branding.)

The corporate media reinforce these tendencies. The rise of television has meant the triumph of advertising in presidential campaigns, as first detailed by Joe McGinniss in *The Selling of the President*, which analyzed the marketing of Richard Nixon in his 1968 campaign.

The television networks, which still dominate the process, value glib sound bites over in-depth issues coverage. Analysis, for the most part, is of messaging, stage management and organizational discipline, which then become the issues.

By constantly running away from real issues, the candidates are unable to build mass support for policies that could actually make a huge difference to average Americans, but which threaten vested interests.

For instance, the looming issue of 2008 is a potential recession. It's a byproduct of the subprime mortgage crisis that brokerage houses profited from handsomely, but which is now dragging them down and resulting in a record number of home foreclosures. The Federal Reserve Bank's solution is to bail out Wall Street by sacrificing Main Street, lowering interest rates, which is cheapening the dollar, thereby sending oil prices sky-high and fueling inflation.

Since the late seventies, Fed policy and

most domestic legislation has been designed to keep the owning class happy. The only substantial legislation is that which increases upper-crust wealth or government power. Dependent upon corporate rulers, no national politician or media outlet will admit the government is a plutocracy.


Without this admission, there can be no open political debate. Without open debate that can spur mass movements, there will be no meaningful health-care solution because the insurance industry will block it, as it did in the first Clinton administration. There will be no action on global warming, because the coal, oil and auto industries will stymie it. The only immigration "reform" will combine punitive measures with ensuring cheap, compliant guest workers. The police state will continue to accrue power, though probably more slowly under a Democrat than a Republican.

There is an important lesson for progressive movements. Despite the fading of the antiwar movement, the 2006 election turned on the Iraq War. Without a movement to hold their feet to the fire, however, the Democrats have continued to fund it. In 2004, much of the left muted their criticisms of the Democrats in favor of the "Anybody But Bush" movement.

We can see how far that got us. Unless there is constant pressure on the Democrats and candidates are forced to discuss real issues, they will have neither the political capital nor the impetus to do more than manage the foundering ship of state.

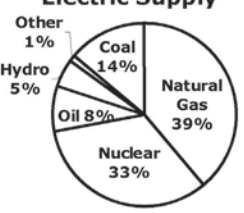
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- No fossil fuels
- One bill
- No contracts
- Adds only 2.5¢/kwh

Electric Supply through 

Electricity generated by 

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In ‘New’ New Orleans, Low-Income Housing to Be Leveled

By EVAN CASPER-FUTTERMAN

NEW ORLEANS—As early as Dec. 15, bulldozers could destroy four of New Orleans’ largest public housing developments, resulting in the loss of almost 4,000 units of low-income housing.

The city Housing Authority approved demolition of the four projects — the St. Bernard, C.J. Peete, B.W. Cooper and Lafitte developments — in late November. The authority, along with the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, plans to replace their 4,600 apartments with mixed-income housing.

Residents and community organizers have formed the Coalition to Stop Demolition and are hoping to mobilize support from around the country for a last-ditch campaign of civil disobedience, after watching a class-action lawsuit fail in the courts and legislation stall in the U.S. Senate.

“We are calling on our national allies to join with the residents of New Orleans and all those who believe in the human right to housing to resist demolition,” said Kali Akuno of the People’s Hurricane Relief Fund.

“The goal [of the coalition] is to get public housing back open and to give people the opportunity to come home,” added Sharon Sears Jasper, a former resident of St. Bernard. “By any means necessary — whatever it takes to stop the demolition and get the residents home.”

Since public-housing residents evacuated the city or were forcibly removed from the developments during Hurricane Katrina

their former homes have been kept fenced off and vacant, despite the fact that these New Deal-era brick buildings suffered little or no wind or water damage from the storm.

Meanwhile, the Federal Emergency Management Administration has announced plans to evict the thousands of families living in its trailers by the end of May. “It’s the individual’s responsibility to go out and find what’s suitable for them,” a FEMA spokesperson told the *New York Times*. And the homeless population in New Orleans and nearby Jefferson Parish has reached around 12,000, almost twice what it was before the flood, with some living under highway overpasses and others camped outside City Hall in an informal tent city.

SMALLER, WHITER

Private development corporations, working off 99-year leases from HUD, have developed plans for mixed-income housing that are consistent with previously announced blueprints for a “new” New Orleans that would be smaller and whiter. The demolition and reconstruction of these four public-housing projects would cost more than \$700 million and reduce the number of low-income units by 82 percent.

Residents and organizers in New Orleans also point to high-level conflicts of interest in the rebuilding contracting process, noting HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson’s ties to Columbia Residential LLC, an Atlanta-based company that is a part of a team that recently received a \$127 million contract to rebuild the St. Bernard project. Jackson formerly worked as a consultant for Columbia

Residential and still owns a stake in it valued at between \$250,000 and \$500,000.

“With the corruption now with Alphonso Jackson, an investigation into him would help, I think, to open the housing again,” Jasper said.

Housing activists are also exasperated with Louisiana’s Republican Senator David Vitter, who has worked to thwart the Gulf Coast Recovery Act of 2007, which passed the House earlier this year with broad bipartisan support. The bill, cosponsored in the Senate by Louisiana’s Mary Landrieu and Christopher Dodd of Connecticut,

would provide assistance to displaced homeowners and authorize the repair and rehabilitation of existing public housing.

“The Senate bill ... [is] just sitting there now, because of David Vitter — he doesn’t want to reopen public housing,” Jasper said.

For more, visit *New Orleans Independent Media Center*, nola.indymedia.org.



STOP THE BULLDOZERS: The Coalition to Stop Demolition hopes to mobilize support from around the country to save low-income housing in New Orleans after watching a class-action lawsuit fail in the courts and legislation stall in the U.S. Senate. PHOTO COURTESY MAVIS YORKS

The GOP Debate: A Forensic-Scatological Analysis

By STEVEN WISHNIA

Out of some combination of morbid curiosity, depressive masochism, and journalism as forensic scatology, I watched the Republican CNN/YouTube debate Nov. 28. If this nest of bigots and psychos (both the candidates and most of the questioners) seriously represents a significant portion of America, I despair for my country.

The GOP fetishes of God, gays, guns and tax cuts are still prevalent, but the main story is that Latino immigrants are now Public Enemy #2 with a bullet, surpassing marriage-minded queers, bumping Black dope fiends down to #4 and conceivably even threatening to knock Muslim terrorists out of the #1 spot. “Sanctuary city” is the new Two Minutes Hate buzzword. Oh well, when the Democrats abandon any vestige of being a pro-labor party, the “populism of fools” will fill the vacuum.

The debate within the Republicans on immigration comes down to one question: “Should we pander to our corporate backers’ need for cheap labor, or to our political base’s fear and hatred of Mexicans?” Door #2 seems to be ahead.

After the other Republicans attacked him

for not barring illegal immigrants’ kids from public schools, not denying them emergency room treatment, and not deporting ones who reported crimes, Rudy Giuliani tried to prove his anti-immigrant bona fides by boasting how he sent Haitians back (to the Duvalier dictatorship or drowning). Meanwhile, Mitt Romney raved about deporting them all, but defended hiring illegals to work on his lawn by saying he had outsourced the job to a contractor and couldn’t be responsible for who they hired.

Romney is one of the most thoroughly smarmy and phony human beings I have ever observed. If the Republican Party were dominated by born-again Satanists, he’d be proclaiming his conversion to the dark side and lambasting his rivals for wearing their pentagrams crooked. John McCain did nail him, though, when Romney said he was against torture, but wouldn’t ban waterboarding, contending that terrorists shouldn’t know what we can’t do to them. “This isn’t 24,” McCain told him.

Even though I know very well that Giuliani is a racist authoritarian bully, seeing him live is still scary. The man could conceivably out-Vader Dick Cheney. His two facial expressions are a wife-beater scowl and a jowl-splitting smirk. It was amusing watching him try to explain why

African-Americans should vote Republican. The former mayor, who has never won more than 20 percent of the Black vote in an election, cobbled together unconvincing babble about education and school choice. (If there were a God, the ghosts of Amadou Diallo and Patrick Dorismond would have materialized out of the wall of logos behind the candidates to wreak revenge.)

McCain, Ron Paul and Mike Huckabee all showed degrees of humanity. McCain spoke unequivocally against torture. But he’s solidly pro-war and believes that the problem in Iraq, as it was in Vietnam, is politicians who won’t “let us win.” Paul is strongly against the Iraq war — and got some applause for that. But he exudes the scent of wingnuttery, like he’s spent far too much of his life listening to far-right conspiracy theorists rant about the Trilateralists and the North American Union.

Huckabee was the only GOP candidate who seems to have any conception of what life is like for working-class people, but he would replace the income tax with a stiff national sales tax that works against low-income earners. He also (essentially) said that God told him it was okay to execute people. (What would Jesus do? He probably wouldn’t be the Roman soldier out there with a hammer and nails.)

And if brains were dynamite, the guerrillas in Iraq would not use Fred Thompson for an IED.

Tom Tancredo is the American Jean Marie Le Pen, a hater with a one-track mind whose ideology is oozing into more mainstream realms. When a mother in Pittsburgh asked what he’d do about lead paint on Chinese-import toys, he went on about blocking ... illegal immigration. (I think that when he says “difficulty assimilating,” it’s code for “spic.”)

Duncan Hunter said gays shouldn’t serve in the military because troops with “Judeo-Christian values” wouldn’t accept them. The first achievement touted in his commercials is his role in building the Berlin Wall along the Mexican border.

The looniest questioners included one who inquired if the candidates believed “every single word in the Bible.” (In the 30 seconds Giuliani spent fumbling for a politically correct answer, I thought of four commandments he’s broken.) Another one wanted to know which candidates owned guns and what their favorite model was.

One silver lining: I don’t think I heard Giuliani say “9/11” more than twice.

RATIFYING APARTHEID

A Palestinian Village Withers

[Editor's Note: A vital component of current peace proposals involves exchanges of territory that would allow Israel to keep its West Bank "settlement blocs" while compensating Palestinians with land inside Israel. Rarely heard are the perspectives of Palestinians like Fareed Taamallah who would be left to endure the presence of Israel's ever-expanding settlements.]

By Fareed Taamallah

QIRA, Occupied West Bank—My community of Qira, like many others, cannot survive in a Palestinian state divided by Israel's settlement blocs. The settlement blocs are built on Palestinian agricultural land and water resources and carve the West Bank into disconnected Palestinian bantustans.

Every morning I see through my window the settlement of Ariel, lying atop the hill adjacent to my village. I've never visited Ariel's beautiful homes and green gardens, so different from our poor, parched community, be-

cause as a Palestinian I am forbidden to enter Ariel, even though it sits on Palestinian land in the West Bank.

In 1978, when construction of Ariel began, I was a child. Yet I recall my frustration and sorrow for the many Palestinian farmers who lost their lands to the Israeli colony. According to the United Nation's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Ariel is one of the four fastest-growing Israeli settlements. It expanded from 179 acres and 5,300 residents in 1985 to 1732 acres and 16,414 inhabitants in 2005. In contrast, my village, which is hundreds of years old, has not grown because the Israeli government restricts the area and growth of Palestinian communities.

Ariel is located in the center of the Salfit District in the northern West Bank, 13 miles east from the Green Line, Israel's pre-1967 border. Ariel is part of the larger "Ariel settlement bloc," which consists of 26 West Bank settlements with nearly 40,000 settlers.

Cutting deep into the heart of the West Bank, the Ariel settlement bloc separates the northern West Bank from the rest of the West

Bank. U.S. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher warned against the construction of Israel's wall around Ariel in June 2004, saying that it would make Palestinian life more difficult and confiscate Palestinian property. Nonetheless, hundreds of acres of Palestinian land were confiscated for that wall.

If the Ariel settlement bloc becomes part of Israel through the territorial exchanges proposed by Israel and supported by the United States, it would be disastrous for the Salfit district's 70,000 residents. Ariel forms a physical barrier. We must travel around the entire settlement and through Israeli checkpoints to reach the town of Salfit, our district's "urban center." It typically took me 90 minutes to drive from my village to Salfit when I worked there, even though it is only four miles away.

Ariel's settlers prevent Palestinians from harvesting their olive groves near the colony. They attack Palestinians, sometimes under the Israeli army's protection. They have even entered mosques and desecrated the Quran inside.

Although the Salfit district is located in the

West Bank's most water-rich region, our water supplies have been redirected to Israel and Ariel. According to the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem, Israeli settlers consume five times more water than local Palestinians. The nearby villages of Kifir al-Dik and Bruqin are constantly without enough water for these reasons.

Sewage from the hilltop settlements and wastewater from Ariel's industrial zone pollute our region. According to the Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem, 80 factories from Ariel's Barkan industrial zone discharge 0.81 million cubic meters of wastewater per year into nearby valleys. All this wastewater and the sewage have formed a river through the agricultural lands of the villages of Kifir al-Dik and Bruqin. These poisonous streams have led to the death and ruin of trees and crops located in their immediate vicinity.

Restrictions on our movement, settler attacks, the diversion of our water and the pollution of our land, all caused by the Ariel settlement bloc, are destroying Salfit's economy and dramatically restricting our rights. Ariel is like a bone in our throat that is choking us.

Palestinians hope to reach a peace agreement with Israel, but they are most concerned with getting back their stolen lands. Incorporating settlement blocs like Ariel into Israel is not a viable solution. Ordinary Palestinians will not be able to cope unless their rights are restored.

A longer version of this article originally appeared at [alternet.org](#).

MAPS:
PALESTINIAN LOSS OF LAND, 1946–1999
SOURCE: CCMEP.ORG


LEFT TO RIGHT:
Palestinian Land
1946 Palestinian and Jewish Land
1947 U.N. Partition Plan
1949-67 Post-1948 Boundaries
1999 Six Years After Oslo Accords

THE LONG ROAD TO ANNAPOLIS

1917—Great Britain gains control of all of historic Palestine at the end of World War 1 and issues the Balfour Declaration committing the British government to supporting a "Jewish national home" in Palestine. At the time, Jews make up less than 10 percent of Palestine's population and own about 2 percent of its own land.

1948—A U.N. partition gives 57 percent of Palestine to the new state of Israel, which is immediately recognized by the United States. Fighting breaks out. When the smoke clears, Israel controls 78 percent of Palestine and 800,000 Palestinians have fled into exile. The myth of "a land without a people, for a people without a land" is turned into reality. In 1947, Jews made up a third of Palestine's total population and owned less than 7 percent of the land.

1964—The Palestine Liberation Organization is founded. The PLO Charter calls for Israel to be abolished and replaced by a single binational state where both Jews and Arabs could live.

1967—Israel seizes control of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem (the other 22 percent of Palestine) at the end of the Six-Day War and begins the military occupation and colonization of the Territories that continues to this day. U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338 are passed, calling for a permanent Middle East peace deal based on Israel returning to its pre-1967 borders for recognition of its right to exist.

1988—The PLO acknowledges Israel's right to exist and signals support for a two-state solution.

1993-2000—The PLO and Israel sign the Oslo Accords in which the PLO again recognizes Israel's right to exist while the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state is put off until "final status" negotiations are completed. The Palestinian Authority (PA) is established to carry out police functions that the Israelis are no longer willing to do.

2000-2003—Exasperated by the rapid buildup of Israeli settlements and Jewish-only roads since the signing of Oslo, Palestinian militants launch the second Intifada in September 2000. Eight hundred and thirty-three Israelis and 2,239 Palestinians are killed over the next 39 months. Retired general Ariel Sharon becomes Israel's prime minister and launches the construction of a 25-foot-high wall that will eventually extend 400 miles and cut deep into the West Bank, in some cases surrounding whole Palestinian villages.

2003—Mahmoud Abbas is installed as the Palestinian Prime Minister at the insistence of the United States and Israel. The Bush administration then launches a much-touted "Roadmap" to a Palestinian state by 2005 that requires Palestinians to make all the major concessions while Israel is allowed to continue the occupation and a policy of "targeted" assassinations.

2004—In a shift of long-standing U.S. policy, President Bush openly supports Sharon's position that a final peace should not be based on pre-1967 borders. Bush's stance delights not only the Israelis but millions of Christian Zionists that are an integral part of his electoral base.

2005—Israel hands over the Gaza Strip to the Palestinians but continues to exert complete control over its borders, airspace and economy.

2006—Riding a wave of resentment against corruption in the Palestinian Authority, the Islamic militant group Hamas wins Palestinian parliamentary elections. The United States and Israel reject any negotiations with Hamas and launch a punishing international embargo that cuts off most international funding for the Authority. Israel also kidnaps dozens of elected legislators and government officials, imprisoning them to this day.

2007—The United States and Israel throw their full support behind Abbas, who remains in control of the West Bank after his forces were routed from the Gaza Strip in June. Five months later the Annapolis conference is convened with the goal of reaching a final peace agreement by the end of 2008. The democratically elected Hamas government is not invited to the talks.

—JOHN TARLETON

WHEN ISRAELI, U.S. AND PALESTINIAN LEADERS MET IN ANNAPOLIS NOV. 27, THE CONFERENCE WAS WIDELY HERALDED IN THE MEDIA AS A BOLD NEW INITIATIVE FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

GUESS AGAIN.

Israel Runs Out the Clock

By Jeff Halper

One may well think that the struggle inside the Jewish community of Israel is between those of the political right, who want to maintain the settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank so as to "redeem" the Greater Land of Israel as a Jewish country, and those of the left who seek a two-state solution with the Palestinians and are thus willing to relinquish enough of the "territories", if not at all, in order that a viable Palestinian state may emerge.

This is not really the case. Polls and the make-up of the Israeli government suggest that perhaps a quarter of Israeli Jews fall into the first group, the die-hards, while not more than 10 per cent support a full withdrawal from the occupied territories. (Virtually no Israeli Jews use the term "occupation").

The vast majority of Israeli Jews, stretching from the liberal Meretz party through Labour, Kadima and into the "liberal" wing of the Likud, excepting only the religious parties and the extreme right-wing led by former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the current minister of strategic affairs, Avigdor Lieberman, share a broad consensus: both for security reasons and because of Israel's "facts on the ground," the Arabs (as we Israelis call the Palestinians) will have to settle for a truncated mini-state on no more than 15 to 20 percent of the country between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River.

What's more, it's agreed that the decision whether to relinquish any territory and how much is an exclusively Israeli decision. Our power, our all-encompassing concern for security and the plain fact that the Palestinians just don't count (except as a nuisance factor) limit any peace process to, at best, a willingness to grant them a tiny Bantustan on four or five cantons, all encircled by Israeli settlements and the military.

This is, of course, completely unacceptable to the Palestinians which raises a fundamental problem. In any genuine negotiations leading to just, sustainable and mutually agreed-upon accord, Israel would have to give up much more than it is willing to. For Israel, negotiations must take place once in a while, if only to project an image of it as a country seeking peace — Annapolis being merely the latest charade — but they can

never lead to any real breakthrough because two-thirds of the Jewish public supports a permanent Israeli presence in the occupied territories, civilian and military, that forecloses a viable Palestinian state.

How, then, does Israel retain its major settlements, a "greater" Jerusalem and control over territory and borders without appearing intransigent? How can it maintain its image as the only seeker of peace and the victim of Arab terrorism, effectively concealing its own violence and, indeed, the very fact of occupation in order to shift the blame to the Palestinians?

The answer for the past 40 years of occupation is the status quo, delay, while quietly expanding the settlements and strengthening its grip on the West Bank and Gaza.

The end result, toward which Israel has been progressing deliberately and systematically since 1967, can only be called apartheid, which means "separation" in Afrikaans, precisely the term Israel uses to describe its policy (hafrada in Hebrew). And it is apartheid in the strict sense of the term: one population separating itself from the rest, then dominating permanently and institutionally through a political regime like an expanded Israel locking the Palestinians into dependent and impoverished cantons.

The overriding question for the Israeli government, then, is not how to reach peace. If peace and security were truly the issue, Israel could have had that 20 years ago if it had conceded the 22 percent of the country required for a viable Palestinian state. Today, when Israel's control is infinitely stronger, why, asks the Israeli Jewish public and the government it elects, should we concede anything significant?

We enjoy peace with Egypt and Jordan, and Syria is dying to negotiate. We have relations with most Arab and Muslim states. We enjoy the absolute and uncritical support of the world's only superpower, supported by a compliant Europe. Terrorism is under control, the conflict has been made manageable, Israel's economy is booming. What, ask Israelis, is wrong with this picture?

No, the issue for Israel is rather how to



transform its occupation from what the world considers a temporary situation to a permanent political fact accepted by the international community, de facto if need be or, if apartheid can be finessed in the form of a two-state solution, then formally.

And here's the dilemma and the source of debate within the Israeli government: Does Israel continue with the strategy that has served it so well these past 40 years, delaying or prolonging negotiations so as to maintain the status quo, all the while strengthening its hold over the Palestinian territories? Or, at this unique but fleeting moment in history when George Bush is still in office, does it try to nail it all down, forcing upon the Palestinians a "transitional state" that requires final issues be decided through negotiations?

Olmert, following Sharon, is pushing for the latter. Netanyahu, Lieberman, the right-wing (including many in Olmert's own party) and, significantly, Labour Party Chairman and Defense Minister Ehud Barak, always a military hawk, are resisting out of fear that even a process of pretend negotiations might get out of hand, creating expectations of Israel. Better, they say, to stay with the tried-and-true policy of status quo which can, if cleverly managed, extend indefinitely.

Besides, Bush is a lame duck, and no pressure will be put on Israel until June 2009, at least six months after the next U.S. president

is inaugurated, Democrat or Republican. We're just fine until then; why rock the boat? The only tricky time for Israel is the two years in the middle of a presidential term. We can weather that. Annapolis? We'll try cautiously for apartheid, hoping that Abu Mazen [Mahmoud Abbas], prodded by Quartet envoy Tony Blair, will play the role of collaborator. If that doesn't work, well, status quo is always a reliable default.

In the meantime, as long as the Israeli public enjoys peace and quiet and a good economy, and as long as it remains convinced that security requires Israel to retain control of the territories, no pressure will come from the home front for any meaningful change of policy.

Given this political landscape in Israel, in the territories and abroad, it's hard for Israeli leaders to conceal their ebullient feeling that, whether formally or not, "we've won."

Jeff Halper is the coordinator of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD). jeff@icahd.org. A longer version of this article originally appeared online at [tikkun.org](#).

Israeli Democracy: Arabs Need Not Apply

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY ELLEN DAVIDSON

NAZARETH—Israel is frequently cited as “the only democracy in the Middle East.” The 1.2 million Palestinians living inside Israel’s borders, would beg to differ.

Beginning with the founding of Israel as a Jewish state in 1948, Palestinians have been treated as second-class citizens and enemies from within. Each of the “Basic Laws,” the foundation of the Israeli legal system, begins with a statement that Israel is a Jewish

villages had been declared “military zones” by the Israeli army. The owners frequently were living a few miles away, waiting for the military to allow them access to their land, only to have the title stripped from them.

Indirect discrimination is equally insidious: Many social services such as student and housing loans are predicated on having a military service number. Since Palestinians are exempt from military service, few

get. Per capita income in East Jerusalem is 1,311 shekels per month (or \$341), versus 5,968 (or \$1,520) in West Jerusalem.

Israel maintains two educational systems, one in Hebrew for Jews and one in Arabic for Palestinians. According to Ittijah, the Union of Arab Community-Based Organizations, 75 percent of Jewish schools have career and vocational guidance services, while only one-quarter of Arab schools do. Government-funded preschools do not operate in Arab towns.

Cultural discrimination flows from the other three forms of discrimination, says the AHR’s Zeidan. Israeli culture is steeped in racism, he says. More than half the population believes that political rights such as voting should be withdrawn from Palestinians living inside Israel. The Ysrael B’tenah Party, which with 12 seats is the fourth largest party in the Knesset, openly speaks of “transfer” of the Palestinian population.

“The space that we can act inside Israel is getting smaller and smaller,” says Zeidan.

While Israel is legally a bilingual state — Hebrew and Arabic — you are more likely to encounter signage in Russian or English than in Arabic. ATMs, for instance, are mostly in Hebrew, English and sometimes Russian. Many government offices refuse to conduct business in Arabic.

“Israel is a democratic state for Jews and Jews only,” says Fida Ibrahim Abu Ata, public relations director of Ittijah. “And that is how it should be stated, as plain and vivid as this.”

Ellen Davidson is a longtime Jewish-American peace activist from New York who traveled to Palestine on a delegation with the Middle East Children’s Alliance, mecaforpeace.org.



CHILDREN IN THE OLD CITY IN EAST JERUSALEM: Funding for services in Palestinian neighborhoods composes only 12 percent of the city budget, while Palestinians make up almost 40 percent of the population.

state. For example, the purpose of the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Freedom is “to establish the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state.”

From 1948 until 1966, Palestinians inside Israel were subject to military law, while Jews lived under civilian law. During that time, 66 percent of Arab-owned land was confiscated. In 1947, Jews owned 6.7 percent while Palestinians held the rest. Today, Israeli Palestinians, 20 percent of the population, own 2.5 percent of the land.

Discrimination inside Israel falls broadly into four categories, according to Mohammad Zeidan, general director of the Nazareth-based Arab Association for Human Rights (AHR): laws that give different privileges and rights to Jews and non-Jews; indirect discrimination not specifically linked to religion; institutional discrimination, such as allocation of municipal funds; and racism in public life, including cultural discrimination.

The legal discrimination can be seen explicitly in laws that offer automatic Israeli citizenship to Jews from anywhere in the world, while non-Jews who are married to Israeli citizens face a difficult process for acquiring citizenship.

In order to be elected to the Knesset, the Israeli parliament, political parties must formally recognize Israel as a Jewish state, so even advocating complete equality for Palestinians inside Israel would disqualify a party from running candidates.

Legal discrimination also plays a role in land allocation. Nearly 20 percent of Israeli land is controlled by the Jewish National Fund, which is legally mandated to use the land only to benefit Jews. Much of this land was confiscated from its Palestinian owners by the military or taken away under the “absentee” laws of 1950, which declared that landowners who were not occupying their land in the years 1948 to 1952 forfeited their rights to it. Having been made refugees during the war of 1948, many Palestinians were robbed of their lands by these laws. In addition, many Palestinian

Israeli Arabs have this number. Orthodox Jews are also exempt from military service, but they can go to the military service office and get assigned a number, giving them the same access to the privileges associated with military service. Many help-wanted ads specify that the position is open to candidates “after military service,” another way of saying, “Arabs need not apply.”

Institutional discrimination crops up in community development plans, where Palestinian neighborhoods are held to existing land allocations, while Jewish neighborhoods grow unchecked. In the Arab city of Nazareth, for example, the population of 13,000 Palestinians in 1947 lived on 3,000 acres. In 2007, with a population of 70,000, the city occupies only 3,100 acres, with strict limitations on any expansion.

On the hilltops surrounding it, the mainly Jewish city of Nazareth Illit (built on confiscated Palestinian land) with a population of 50,000, sprawls across 11,250 acres. When the original Palestinian owners of the land went to court to protest the confiscation of their property for “public” purposes, arguing that they were also the public, the court ruled that absorption of immigration was the main “public purpose” of the time.

In 1965, the Israeli parliament adopted the Planning and Construction Law governing development in the country. Dozens of villages were declared “unrecognized” and the land classified as non-residential agricultural land. Some 100,000 Israeli Palestinians live in these villages, which Zeidan says are more aptly called “dis-recognized.” They receive no government services such as electricity, water and sewage, although they pay the same taxes as other citizens, and all structures are considered illegal and subject to demolition.

Municipal funding is also plagued by inequity. In Jerusalem, for example, the population of approximately 700,000 includes 270,000 Palestinians. Social services in mainly Palestinian East Jerusalem receive 12 percent of the city budget. Education in East Jerusalem gets 15 percent of the bud-

REMEMBERING 1948

JERUSALEM—Israeli Jews call the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 a “war of liberation.” Palestinians call it the Naqba — the Catastrophe. More than 500 villages were destroyed and roughly 800,000 Palestinians became refugees — some internally and many in the West Bank and Gaza and in neighboring Lebanon, Syria and Jordan.

For the past 60 years, that history has been contested terrain. Throughout Israel signs, landmarks, and memorials commemorate events in Jewish history more than 2,000 years ago, but there is nothing marking the sites of destroyed Palestinian villages and the massacres of Palestinian civilians 60 years ago.

Few Israeli Jews realize that much of the land that is now parks and national forests was once the site of Palestinian villages. One of the organizations trying to bring this lost history to light is Zochrot — Remembering the Naqba in Hebrew. The goal of the five-year-old organization is to tell the Israeli public what happened in 1948. The group makes tours of destroyed Palestinian villages; contacts people who lived there to record their stories; publishes books of refugee testimony; hosts lectures and workshops for students, activists, and teachers; and places signs in former villages explaining the history of the sites. The signs are usually torn down within hours.

The Nazi Holocaust is a “very deep trauma that affects policy today,” explains Tamar, a Zochrot activist who asked that her last name not be used because she was afraid it might jeopardize her position at work. Rather than saying, “This can never happen again,” the Israeli public says “this can never again happen to us,” thus justifying occupation and discrimination against others. The Holocaust and the establishment of Israel are always linked, in a parable of death and resurrection, she says.

“Jews are used to being the victims,” says Tamar. “It’s hard to accept that they are the oppressors.”

The issue of Palestinians displaced in 1948 is much more sensitive than the occupation of 1967, Tamar explains that people might be willing to talk about a Palestinian state in the Occupied Territories, but to question what happened in 1948 is to attack the Zionist narrative.

She described how in February 2005 Zochrot took some 300 Jews and Palestinians to tour the site of the destroyed village of Lifta, near Jerusalem. The pool from the spring that supplied water to the community is now a favorite swimming spot for Orthodox Jews. They gathered around the touring group, which included former Lifta



LEFT TO RUIN: Residents of the Palestinian village of Lifta were driven out in 1948.

residents, shouting “Death to the Arabs,” and the activists had to call the Jerusalem police to escort them through the village.

Zochrot has also worked through the courts. The group forced the Jewish National Fund to put signs up in Park Canada saying that there had been Palestinian villages on the site, which was evacuated during the 1967 war. The signs have since been destroyed.

Nevertheless, Tamar is optimistic: “Slowly it starts coming to the surface. Twenty years ago there was nothing. Maybe it has to be a new generation. It can’t be people who fought in ’48.”

—E.D.

For a look at Palestinian and Israeli history, visit nakbainhebrew.org.

Derailing the Coal Train

NEW AUSSIE PM SIGNS KYOTO, STILL EMBRACES FOSSIL FUELS



RIGHT ON TRACK: An Australian climate activist with Rising Tide Newcastle stepped into the path of moving train laden with 8,000 tons of coal Nov. 19, forcing it to stop. The action took place days before Australians voted Prime Minister John Howard out of office for refusing to address climate change. PHOTO: STEVE PHILLIPS

By Steve Phillips

NEWCASTLE, AUSTRALIA—Kevin Rudd can ratify all the Kyoto Protocols he likes, but if he doesn’t quit coal, we’re screwed.

The election of Rudd’s new Labor government here in Australia is being hailed as a watershed moment for this country’s approach to climate change and indeed for global climate change politics. Rudd was sworn in on Dec. 3, and his first act was to ratify Kyoto, which assigns modest carbon emissions caps to the world’s wealthy nations. When his government attends the December United Nations climate talks in Bali, it will mark the first time in more than a decade that Australia attends the annual gathering not as a foot-dragging antagonist, but as a constructive participant.

A defining characteristic of the 11 long years of the government of outgoing prime minister John Howard was its denial, obfuscation, fear-mongering, blame-shifting, campaigns of mis- and dis-information, and steadfast refusal to accept targets to cut greenhouse pollution even as Australia came to be scorched by an unprecedented drought driven in part by climate change. which is making our island continent hotter and drier.

Unfortunately, the complete failure of the Howard government on climate change made it possible for the Labor Party to win the election without really offering an inspiring alternative. Yes, we ratified Kyoto. Yes, we’ll set ourselves a 20 percent renewable energy target and a 60 percent long-term greenhouse pollution target. Neither of these targets is adequate to the task at hand though, and we still have no short-term pollution target. The most devastating failure of all is Labor’s enthusiastic support for Australia’s biggest polluting industry: coal.

Burning coal for electricity produces half of Australia’s entire domestic greenhouse pollution. We are also the world’s biggest exporter of coal, and the emissions from our coal exports exceed our entire domestic greenhouse footprint. Worse still, our coal exports are increasing much faster than our domestic emissions, with all major coal ports in Australia undergoing major expansions. Both major political parties support these expansions.

Fossil fuels produce about 60 percent of total global greenhouse pollution, converting fossilized carbon into active atmospheric carbon, which stays in the air forever (in human terms). It is simply inconceivable that human societies can reverse climate change while still burning vast amounts of fossil fuels, but that is exactly what most government’s around the world will have you believe they can do.

Kyoto ratification should no longer be the yardstick for a government’s commitment to solving climate change. Kyoto’s targets are hopelessly weak (Australia’s target is an 8 percent increase in emissions from 1990 to 2012), and the protocol contains major loopholes, such as carbon-trading arrangements that allow rich nations to buy their way out of real pollution cuts and impose timber monocultures on communities in the global south.

A government nowadays should have to meet much stricter criteria to call itself a leader on climate change. For example, does it accept that rich countries are historically responsible for most of the elevated carbon levels in the atmosphere, are still responsible for the highest emissions per capita, and therefore must make take the first and biggest steps to cut pollution?

Australia’s per capita emissions are among the highest in the world (higher even than the United States according to some studies), and that doesn’t even include coal exports. While politicians in Australia and the United States often point to China and India as the villains of climate change, China’s per capita emissions are less than one-fifth of our own. India’s are less than a

tenth. In general, the developed world’s per capita emissions are four times that of the developing world. If you consider historical emissions, the difference is starker still.

Many climate activists in Australia have already been begun drawing attention to these issues and are reframing the climate debate from “skeptics versus believers” to the far more potent “fossil fuels versus solutions.” In the lead-up to the election, various groups used direct action to blockade coal ships and trains and a power station in Newcastle as well as a power station in Victoria, to put the issue of coal on the political agenda.

The new Australian government, on the other hand, has pledged to hand over more than \$500 million in public money to coal corporations to sink into the misnomer called “clean” coal — burying greenhouse pollution underground. The many problems with this “sweep it under the carpet” approach can be largely boiled down to two points: we don’t know if it will ever work, and if it does it will be too late.

The big challenge facing the climate movement in Australia now is to turn public concern over climate change into a recognition that both sides of major party

politics are utterly failing us, and then turn that into an irresistible demand for an end to the usage of fossil fuels.

Steve Phillips is a grassroots climate activist in Australia and member of Rising Tide Newcastle. For more information, see risingtide.org.au/.

POST-KYOTO TALKS BEGIN

As diplomats gather in Bali Dec. 3 to 14, they will face a daunting task — how to negotiate a successor agreement to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which will expire in 2012 having fallen far short of its modest goal of reducing global carbon emissions by 5 percent from their 1990 levels.

Experts say the pact has to be concluded at a 2009 conference in Copenhagen so that it can be ratified in time to take effect by the end of 2012 when Kyoto’s present commitment period expires.

Neither the United States nor China, which combine to account for half of global carbon emissions, are currently bound by any mandatory targets.

—JOHN TARLETON

Taking the Streets, French Style

By Clémentine Gallot

France’s new conservative President Nicolas Sarkozy is having a tough time. “Sarko American,” as he dubs himself, rode into power in May promising a “rupture” with the past. He has seen his approval rating dip below 50 percent as he pursues neoliberal free-market reforms that would roll back labor protections and a generous social safety net to give hefty tax breaks to the rich. In November, his government saw a wave of strikes and protests by transport workers, university students, professors, civil servants and even opera singers.

“Sarkozy is trying to destroy the means for people to resist so that he can pass unified reforms,” said Damien Babet, visiting sociologist at the Institute of French Studies at New York University.

A Nov. 13-22 strike of transport workers paralyzed traffic throughout the country, bringing back memories of the 1995 national strike that transport workers ignited and which forced an earlier rightwing government to retreat from a free-market reform package. However, this time the mobilization of these relatively “privileged” workers did not gain broad public support

and provoked divisions among the unions themselves. The embattled president was able to claim victory when eight of the transportation unions agreed to open negotiations that are scheduled to continue until mid-December.

“Since 1995 there has been a tendency to fight global struggles against neoliberalism at home, but it has disintegrated slowly since 2002,” Babet said. “Currently, the fact that civil servants protesting for more purchasing power now want to distinguish themselves from the transit workers fighting for their retirement shows that their side is too divided.”

FRANCE’S COLOR LINE

Following the end of the strikes, violence erupted Nov. 26 in Villiers-le-Bel, an impoverished suburb north of Paris, after a pair of youths of Moroccan and Malian origin were killed when their motorbike collided with a police car. Two nights of rioting followed in which a library, a police station and a number of cars were torched and 130 police were injured as disturbances spread as far away as Toulouse before Sarkozy’s government clamped down. The unrest was reminiscent of the three weeks of rioting that took place in the Fall of

2005 following the death of two immigrant youths who were electrocuted while trying to hide from the police in an electrical power substation.

The suburbs (or “banlieues”) have been neglected for decades and were further marginalized in 2005 by Sarkozy when he was France’s tough-minded interior minister.

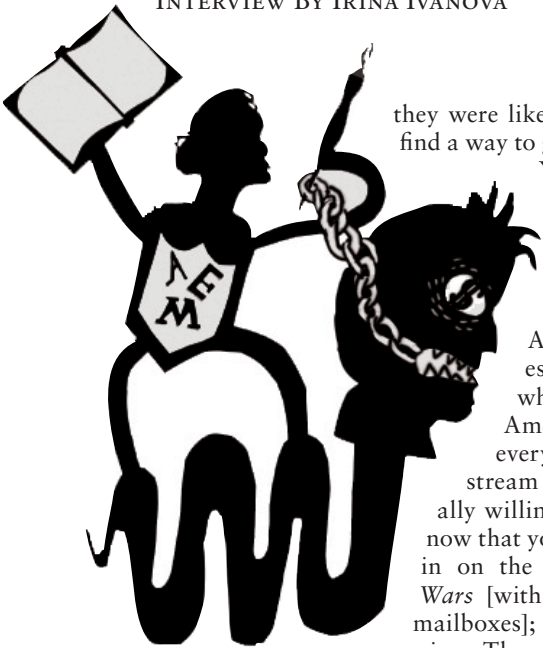
Speaking on national television Nov. 29, Sarkozy said that although a plan for the banlieues would be unveiled in January, he would not give more money to these areas and would be “more severe with the minority [of those who cause trouble].” The plan will be announced by Secretary of State for Urban Policies Fadela Amara, a cabinet minister of Muslim descent.

During a Nov. 27 talk on Sarkozy at NYU, *The New Yorker’s* European correspondent Jane Kramer said she found Sarkozy’s current reform plans “contradictory”: “He doesn’t seem to put together a real program against social violence. He has done nothing substantial for the economy or to fight the inequity of the life of immigrants in the banlieues,” she said.

“Social dissatisfaction will grow particularly in the banlieues,” Babet added. “The tensions there can only rise.”

Marketing at the Dinner Table

INTERVIEW BY IRINA IVANOVA



DANA VINDIGNI

Like Naomi Klein’s *No Logo*, Anne Elizabeth Moore’s *Unmarketable* exposes the spread of corporate marketing into previously untapped areas of our lives. Because many young consumers consider themselves immune to advertising, corporations have responded with a bewildering array of new techniques to get them thinking about — and buying — their products. This ranges from the illegal, such as commissioning underground artists to work on graffiti campaigns, to the insidious (BzzAgent, a website where users sign up to promote products within their social networks, with their only compensation being free products).

Her focus is how countercultural movements — from punk and riot grl to skateboarding and graffiti — have all been used by companies like Nike and PepsiCo to effectively sell their products to the anticorporate crowd.

The author, a co-editor of the now-defunct *Punk Planet*, doesn’t spare herself from scrutiny, either. She describes being ejected from a toy store for “shop-dropping” messages mocking consumerism and her dismay over finding out at the last minute that a zine-making workshop she was hired to teach was sponsored by Starbucks.

IRINA IVANOVA: You write about the shift from mass-market advertising to “small media and word-of-mouth techniques,” which now often dominate marketing strategies. When did that shift happened and what caused it?

ANNE ELIZABETH MOORE: I think the best example in the book, of course, is the *Star Wars* campaign, because *Star Wars* is the most overmarketed product on the face of the earth.

There are no other ways of getting a message out that *Star Wars* hasn’t already tried. Putting your message on a bag of potato chips in the grocery store is pretty extreme for a film, but they did that a really long time ago.

And so when *Star Wars III: Revenge of the Sith* came out, I think

they were like, “We still need to find a way to get in with the kids.

You know, kids love graffiti and they love zines so let’s do that.” So they tapped into the underground. And now the messages weren’t just everywhere in mainstream America, but they were everywhere that mainstream America wasn’t really willing to go either. And now that you have government in on the marketing of *Star Wars* [with *Star Wars* themed mailboxes]; it’s become frightening. The promotion machine behind this film is unstoppable.

II: So the state and the underground are both in on it. What’s left?

AEM: Well that’s the thing, right? There’s not much else left to go. Except, of course, they ... realize that somewhere there are people having Thanksgiving dinner where they’re not actually going to talk about *Star Wars*.

So then we move into this strategy of word-of-mouth marketing. If you control people’s conversation, ultimately you influence their pocketbooks. And that’s where all of the BzzAgent and word-of-mouth stuff and the youth intelligence agency come in. ... People are being given the incentive to market into our normal one-on-one relationships.

II: Corporate appropriation of “free” culture is a catch-22 situation for creators who want to let other artists use their work but don’t want it used by corporations. What do you think of practices like copylefting/Creative Commons as effective alternatives to copyright?

AEM: Creative Commons and the practice of copylefting are both great ways of rethinking how we might reconsider image or content reuse in our culture, but they are not alternatives to copyright, which remains the law.

I think, I hope, that we’re heading for a time when all the Creative Commons kinks will be worked out and we can pass it as law. It’s an incredibly smart and well-articulated system of thinking about content, but I think it hasn’t been tested yet by the forces that are most going to oppose its legal use, which are the corporate.

But outside of those communities who use Creative Commons, it is rare to find artists that don’t want their work used in marketing campaigns, which is the audience I want to read this book.

That “debate” is controlled entirely by mass media, who will argue, as they borrow your work for their ad campaigns, that it is important for all unique voices to be heard by the widest possible audience. They will argue that is de-

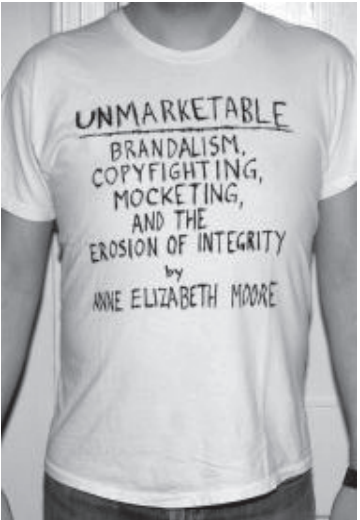
mocracy, that their control of the means of distribution of all culture provides the variety of voices we demand from democracy.

But that is the thing we have been overlooking about democracy, since at least the Telecommunications Act of 1996: That democracy can not be provided to us. It is not the same thing as consumer choice. It is a participatory system that requires we have access to it.

II: What can people who make media and consume media do to protect physical and mental spaces from corporate marketing?

AEM: Christ, this is such a good question. Because as I’ve done these interviews and events more and more, and talked to people who are getting fired up about this book, really getting excited about the ideas in it, I’ve also gotten kind of bummed at how many people don’t look at their own actions within the structure I’m trying to describe. Like the guy who was

just railing about how horrible the shoe company is for encroaching on his culture, but then staunchly defended his own decision to al-



low a beer company to sponsor an alternative art space.

We are all culpable in this now. Start by not being culpable any-

more. Don’t wear the shirt, do the design job, print the brand name, get the tattoo, or use the logo on the flyer or placard. Start there. Let’s see what that alone can do.

To read more from this interview, including Anne Elizabeth Moore’s definition of integrity and how Nike got caught stealing from Dischord Records, visit The Independent online at independent.org.

Gift Giving, Indy Style

This holiday season shed your consumerism and put your money towards building a more sustainable world with an economy based on quality of life. Here are 11 alternative ideas for New Yorkers who love to give.

1. Buy locally. Not only will this support local artists, businesses and farmers, but you will lower your carbon footprint by not having to ship gifts around the country or world.

2. Buy used items. Take the challenge to buy nothing new. Look for used bookstores, record stores, clothing stores, odds & end stores. Check out items on craigslist.org. Recycle items through freecycle.org.

3. Give “I owe you” coupons. This can be a fun way to do nice things for others, when they want them, without consuming anything. Think backrubs, cleaning the bathroom, babysitting, taking days off work or making dinners.

4. Give love, not presents. Thank significant people in your life for their love, support, friendship and partnership. Take time to write a nice letter or card. Light some candles and be kinky!

5. Bake. Spend money buying organic ingredients and take time to bake a treat or dinner for your loved ones.

6. Make your own gifts! Don’t run to the craft store just yet. Think about how you can use items around the house or even scraps of items you find around town or would otherwise throw away. Create beauty from waste.

7. Give plants. Buy plants from local businesses or at farmers markets to give to others. Pot them in old containers or in used plastic coffee cups. Make sure you drill holes in the bottom for drainage. Instead of ornamental plants, give herbs that people can grow and eat themselves!



8. Treat someone to information. Give the gift of independent media by purchasing a subscription to publications that offer a voice more critical than that of the mainstream, for-profit media. If you’re going to buy books, don’t buy them at Barnes & Noble or Borders. Support local bookstores such as Bluestockings (172 Allen St.), Revolution Books (9 W. 19th St.), Housing Works (126 Crosby St.), St. Marks Books (3rd Ave. & 9th St.), Mercer St. Books (206 Mercer St.), Hue Man Books (Frederick Douglass Blvd. & 125th St.), Uptown Sister’s Book Store (156th St. & Amsterdam) and Community Book Store in Park Slope (143 7th Ave.).

9. Make a donation as a gift. Donate money on behalf of Iraqi refugees, environmental protection or to help out less fortunate people in our own community. Search for “ethical,” “meaningful,” or “charitable” gifts online to get some ideas.

10. Give your time. New Yorkers are always busy, right? Perhaps what would mean the most to someone is to spend time with them over the holidays, or make a larger commitment for the next year. Volunteer for local organizations. Care for family. Make a date.

11. Give yoga class passes. Yoga should be for everyone, not just yuppies. Give your loved one an opportunity to go to a safe space to get exercise, emotional balance and mental clarity. On the cheaper side, support the donation-based Yoga to the People studio in the East Village (yogatothepeople.com).

—JESSICA LEE

ART BY JENNIFER LEW

A Woman with a Different Vision

Jane Jacobs and the Future of New York
MUNICIPAL ARTS SOCIETY OF NEW YORK

2007 launched the great Robert Moses revival in New York City. The year opened with a trifecta of exhibits at the Museum of the City of New York, the Queens Museum of Art and Columbia University, each attempting to rehabilitate the legacy of master builder. A revisionist history of Moses, published by Columbia University professors Kenneth T. Jackson and Hilary Ballon, burnishes the image of the legendary “power broker.” Beyond the exhibit halls, the success of a cluster of large-scale, controversial city development projects in downtown Brooklyn, the Williamsburg waterfront and West Harlem lent credence to *New York Times* architecture critic Robin Pogrebin’s contention that the Moses “legacy is more relevant than ever.” As the year draws to a close Jane Jacobs, Moses’ greatest political antagonist, finally gets her chance to reply. Reply in the form of a museum exhibit, of course; the urban theorist, writer and community organizer passed away in April 2006. Given the current wave of Moses-mania, what might the woman who consistently counseled activists “not to feel

helpless,” say to us today? The Jane Jacobs and the Future of New York exhibit is appropriately small in scale. A large bank of television screens at the exhibit entrance, each featuring different scenes of city life and New York residents discussing the future of their neighborhoods, provides visitors with an appropriate level of multimedia-induced vertigo. Beyond the entrance, two gallery rooms, one devoted to Jacobs’ “four principles of healthy cities” and the second to her legendary community organizing strategies, are a powerful riposte to the current idealization of Robert Moses. Entering the first gallery, it becomes clear that Jacobs’ urban vision remains unmatched in its focus on the importance of community and “ordinary city people.” The mantra of “mixed uses, frequent streets, varied buildings and concentration” has become familiar to every undergraduate urban studies major, and the exhibition does an excellent job of illuminating these concepts with examples from contemporary New York City. One might have hoped for more information on Jacobs’ predecessors and intellectual inspirations, but given the size of the exhibit, this omission is understandable. The second gallery room, devoted to Jacobs’ political organizing, is perhaps even more relevant to the 21st-century city. It is

also more insistently problematic and highlights the organizational and strategic dilemmas facing the next generation of Jacobs-inspired community activists. More than 40 years later, Jacobs’ deep radicalism, both intellectual and rhetorical, comes as something of a shock. (The museum notes, without comment, that Jacobs once threatened “blood on the streets” of the West Village in response to a planned eviction.) The dramatic and oft-told story of confrontation between Jacobs and Robert Moses over the city’s plans to build the Lower Manhattan Expressway through Washington Square Park still packs a punch. Most inspiring, perhaps, is the Municipal Arts Society’s focus on present-day community organizing, as the exhibit highlights the work of neighborhood groups like Neighbors Allied for Good Growth (NAG) (in Williamsburg), Nos Quedamos (in the South Bronx) and UPROSE (United Puerto Rican Organization of Sunset Park). All of these groups, the exhibit argues convincingly, carry on Jacobs’ political legacy. As the exhibit concludes, however, this focus on present-day neighborhood action and the Municipal Arts Society’s own calls for ordinary museum visitors to “get involved in their neighborhood” (presented in a flyer called “The City is You”) prompt the



question, is Jacobs’ vision enough to confront and defeat the massive power structures threatening to turn New York City into a tourist-centric millionaires’ playground? Just down the street from the exhibit is Rockefeller Center, blanketed by throngs of Christmas visitors and the season’s first snowfall. Ironically, Jacobs cited the streets around Rockefeller Center as a perfect example of the kind of short blocks that created an urban “sense of place.” Today, however, that sense of place is reserved only for the incredibly wealthy and the hordes of Midwestern tourists who increasingly power the engine that is post-industrial New York. Even more uncertain is the question of whether or not Jacobs-inspired organizing tactics can succeed in a world of increasingly globalized capital. Jacobs was passionate in her defense of ordi-

nary people’s ability to fight the powers that oppressed them. However, the number of recent failed attempts to stop large development projects (the collapse of city plans to build a New York Jets stadium on the far west side is the exception that proves the rule) casts doubt on the ability of local communities to solve large urban problems. Jane Jacobs’ urban vision continues to inspire. The strategies needed to realize that vision, however, are still up for grabs. —CHRIS ANDERSON

The exhibit is on view at the Municipal Arts Society of New York, 457 Madison Ave at East 50th Street, through Jan. 5, 2008.

Kara Walker: Shadows of the Past

My Complement, My Enemy, My Oppressor, My Love
KARA WALKER
WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Kara Walker’s art begins with very little, with paper dolls, if you will; with cutouts that become gallery-size murals, vast, panoramic epics of Black slavery in America. The murals present Walker’s pictorializations of slavery — the transport of slaves, the slave ship, Southern plantation life — as she imagines it to have been. And in these images, at once fantasy and fantastical, Walker explores the origins of racism in America today. She asks: What is racism? Why? Who is white? In the survey of her work currently at the Whitney Museum of American Art through Feb. 3, the artist displays an imagination in revolt. She is a *revolte*, an absolutist; opposed to confession and to absolution, the easing of conscience with forgiveness as a reward. She addresses her exhibition, “Dear you hypocritical fucking Twerp,” and continues, “Should I never be heard from again, follow the Route of my forbears and quietly, GO....”



In her major works — her murals — Walker places black cutouts in silhouette against very large areas of white space. I thought of Franz Kline’s powerful black-and-white paintings, into which he later introduces some color — as Walker, herself, does. There are interesting natural elements in her murals, a moss-hung tree, the moon, a passing cloud, more clouds, and then there is rampant sexuality, “come-ly” Negresses, “massa knock me up.” Blacks gesture and fly and are hanged. Lynched. Exhibiting her vision of slavery and racism, Walker is cruel, funny, grotesque, enigmatic. In smaller works, for instance, of cut paper and tempera on canvas, she makes black shadowgrams with titles — “Battlefield at Dusk,” “Ship,” “The Future.” It is difficult to de-

termine what is going on in them. She composes primitive, short films with musical accompaniment — banjo, a vocal, “Pickin’ cotton all day,” a “Darkey Hymn — ‘All I Want.’” A child’s voice is heard — “I wish I were white.” With historical references, she superimposes her cutouts upon pages of scenes from *Harper’s Pictorial History of the Civil War* — “The Last Delegation from Alabama in the Congress of the United States,” Ulysses S. Grant. The Grant portrait reminded me of Chattanooga, Tenn., the Battle of Lookout Mountain, Missionary Ridge. Walker was born in 1969 in Stockton, Calif. Her father, Larry, is a painter, formerly chairman of the art department at the University of the Pacific and later

at Georgia State University in Atlanta. She received a BFA from the Atlanta College of Art in 1991 and an MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1994, and is now an associate professor of visual arts at Columbia University. Unlike such important Black artists of the past as Henry Tanner, Robert Gwathmey, William H. Johnson, Horace Pippin and Jacob Lawrence, all easel painters, Walker does not have one painting in the show. Walker manifestly was acquainted with the collages of Romare

Bearden, who grew up in Harlem and attempted to come to terms with the experience of Blacks in America. She may have been more directly influenced by Jackson Pollock and Andy Warhol, who recapitulated and rearticulated Western art, Pollock courageously embracing and corralling the absolute, Warhol overturning the whole damned enterprise. —DONALD PANETH

The exhibit is on view at the Whitney Museum of American Art, 945 Madison Ave at East 75th Street through Feb. 3, 2008.



Life-sized paper cutouts by acclaimed artist Kara Walker evoke the reality of slavery and racism. **Above:** “Slavery! Slavery! Presenting a GRAND and LIFELIKE Panoramic Journey into Picturesque Southern Slavery or “Life at ‘Ol’ Virginny’s Hole’ (sketches from Plantation Life), See the Peculiar Institution as never before! All cut from black paper by the able hand of Kara Elizabeth Walker, an Emancipated Negress and leader in her Cause.” **Above left:** “A Work on Progress.” IMAGES: WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART.



JENNIFER LEW

In the materialistic, militaristic desert of America in the 1980s, the hardcore punk scene was one of the few subcultures that was screaming “fuck you, Ronald Reagan and the greedy warmon-

whole other world away faster than nuclear weapons, better than drugs,” says Maryland rural refugee Shawna Kenney. “My first stage-dive!” exults Sto Cinders. “I was a punk and THIS was my

From the Punk Scene to Acoustic Theory

ger horse you rode in on!” It was a radical, do-it-yourself network, created almost entirely by people in their teens and 20s on very low budgets, yet it had international reach, and its influence is still felt in today’s radical movements.

The 40-odd writers in *My First Time: A Collection of First Punk Show Stories* (edited by Chris Duncan, AK Press) recount their memories with the fervor of a religious conversion. “This was what I was waiting for. This was real,” writes John Poddy of a D.O.A. show. “The noise from their amps melts that

family.” Most of the stories follow similar lines, though the seventies memoirs tend to be druggier and more degenerate.

One exception is Ann Kanaan, who describes how she chaperoned her teenage son’s band’s first show — and pulled her five-year-old off his big brother’s knees mid-set. Ramsay Kanaan would grow up to cofound AK Press.

As someone who was playing hardcore shows in the eighties, I’m pleased to have helped create something that still means so much. But as I was at least a decade older than most of these writers, I was much more cynical. Yes, the DIY process and radical stances were inspiring, but the book glosses over the violence that plagued the scene — skinheads, homophobic in New York and racist in other places — and the music of seventies punk was better.

The revival of anarchism is another legacy of punk. But anarcho-primitivist philosopher John Zerzan, in his 1994 book *Future Primitive*, dismissed punk as a standardized and clichéd “musical sneer.” In the

essay “Tonality and the Totality,” Zerzan argues that all tonal music is inherently authoritarian, part of the “grammars of domination,” because it limits aural expression to an arbitrary and narrow range of sounds — paralleling the regimentation of society. He theorizes that Bach articulated the hegemony of capitalist values, and that jazz and rock are merely rebel-styled repackaging of standard Western harmonies, concluding that the only revolutionary music is the most atonal of the 20th-century avant-garde.

This is an example of how someone who’s smart and extremely knowledgeable can let logic and ideology lead them to an absurd and ignorant position. It ignores the principles of acoustics—that the intervals generally considered consonant, such as octaves, fourths and fifths, reflect simple mathematical ratios rather than arbitrary authority. It completely ignores the social context of music. And Zerzan’s take is extremely Eurocentric — yes, African-American musics such as blues and jazz

use standard Western chords, but bent notes, microtonal shadings, and improvisation are crucial parts of their art. Turkish, Indian, and Indonesian music all use distinctly different scales than Euro-American music, but they all fit within octaves. The main difference is that tuning isn’t standardized to the 440-Hz A, as it is in the West — a saz, raga trio, or gamelan orchestra might be in tune with itself and nothing else.

I probably like 20th-century “avant-garde” music more than most of the people reading this, but the music in that genre that moves me the most is in the vein of John Coltrane and Albert Ayler, intensely emotional with deep roots in gospel and blues. And arguing that tonality is inherently oppressive is like arguing that language is inherently oppressive — which Zerzan also does. Yes, words are arbitrary and often inadequate, but what other mutually comprehensible way do we have to communicate?

—STEVE WISHNIA

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The Ken Burns Effect

In Apple’s popular iMovie program, there’s a feature called “The Ken Burns Effect” that zooms and pans across still images in the style of photomontage the famed documentarian popularized in such films as *The Civil War*, *Jazz*, and *Baseball*. Sadly, this effect is set to default within the program, as if Apple assumes one would automatically like the stills within a movie to look just like a Burns film. It’s an aggravating feature, not just for promoting Burns’ overrated style, but also for illuminating the near-endless homogeneity of most documentary filmmaking.

Perhaps someone in your circle of friends or family is looking forward to receiving a Burns film box set on DVD this holiday season. If so, consider the following an alternative gift guide for documentaries, wherein a much-loved but thoroughly overrated film from the genre is rejected in favor of a less-loved, underrated choice by yours truly.

Hoop Dreams vs. Love and Diane. Both these films portray the popular doc subject of individuals struggling to overcome great socioeconomic adversity, but where the former relies too heavily on tired inspirational sports-movie clichés, the latter intimately shows the difficulty of finding compassion or forgiveness in the crossfire of addiction, poverty and a corrupt welfare system. Jennifer Dworkin’s film, ten

years in the making, earns its sense of hope with a frightening immediacy that makes the Steve James film look hollow. Unavailable on commercial DVD, *Love and Diane* can be special-ordered from Women Make Films and has been shown on PBS’ P.O.V. series.

Roger & Me vs. Specters of the Spectrum. Possibly the only documentary more overrated than *Hoop Dreams*, Michael Moore’s first film is by far his worst: a slapdash, meandering, generally insulting work that he has gradually matured past with each subsequent film. For genuinely persuasive muckraking cinema, check out instead Craig Baldwin’s pseudo sci-fi found-footage doc, which appropriates our own media and uses it against itself to delirious effect. It’s just the kind of bizarre, ingenious political filmmaking this country could use more of.

Capturing the Friedmans vs. Brother’s Keeper. Both of these fall under the so-odd-it-has-to-be-true subgenre, but where the former seems too often cheap and exploitive (ooh, child-molester clown!), the latter is a revelation for how its murder-mystery framework actually adds layers of mystery the more we learn of the story. Bruce Sinofsky and Joe Berlinger (makers of the equally brilliant *Paradise Lost* films) so concretely portray the hermit-like existence of the Ward brothers that familiar

documentary themes (incest, murder, corruption, media manipulation) seem totally new.

An Inconvenient Truth vs. Lessons of Darkness. While the former has some admirable traits, it really does look like a silly PowerPoint lecture when compared to Werner Herzog’s haunting, mystical portrayal of Kuwait after the first Gulf War. With vast helicopter shots showing oil fires burning so high they practically scorch the sky, Herzog presents the landscape as if viewed by a distant creature, unfamiliar with the waste and destruction it sees. His vision of environmental apocalypse is more powerful than any charts Al Gore could possibly dream up.

March of the Penguins vs. The Films of Jean Painlevé. Admittedly, the former is an easy target, but that doesn’t mean you shouldn’t show your kids something more enriching. For more than 40 years, Painlevé specialized in poetic animal and nature films that increasingly bordered on the abstract. His belief in the inherent strangeness of the natural world is most apparent in his many underwater films, some of which have been shown live with musical accompaniment by Yo La Tengo. A DVD of some of these films is available in the U.K., with a U.S. release apparently in the works.

—CHARLIE BASS

Dark World

Persepolis
MARJANE SATRAPI AND VINCENT
PARONNAUD, 2006

Inspired by Art Spiegelman’s Pulitzer prize-winning *Maus*, *Persepolis*, a portrayal of the Islamist dictatorship in Iran, once again proved that cartooning is a form capable of handling serious subject matter.

The animated film, which opens Dec. 25, was adapted from the critically acclaimed series of Marjane Satrapi’s four graphic memoirs. Titled after the ancient capital of the Persian Empire, *Persepolis* is Satrapi’s poignant and captivating reflection on the establishment of a theocracy in Iran. Through the eyes of 6-year-old Marji, a reckless child whose family members resist the dictatorship and are imprisoned, the film follows the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the fall of the Shah’s monarchy and the early days of Ayatollah Khomeini’s republic. As a teenager, Marji flees from the Iran-Iraq war and the Iranian regime to Vienna. As a young woman, she returns to Tehran to study, experience depression, flirt and booze, all the while restricted by everyday repression and censorship (running late for a class,



she is arrested by two “guardians of the revolution” for the “obscene movements” of her behind.)

Immediately following the success of the books, Iranian-born Satrapi, an energetic 38-year-old with a devastating sense of humor, received offers to shoot a Hollywood version of her cartoons starring Brad Pitt and Jennifer Lopez. Instead, the graphic novelist and children’s book illustrator, who has been living in France since 1994, chose to work on the script with independent designer Vincent Paronnaud (known for his comics *Mr. Ferraille* and *Smart Monkey*, published under the pseudonym Winschluss). With the help of 90 graphic technicians and the voices of Sean Penn, Iggy Pop and Gena Rowlands, they created what is now one of the first

autobiographical animated works. A refined and inventive melodrama, it created a buzz at the New York Film Festival and its selection at Cannes in May provoked anger in Iran, where the film has been censored. When it was awarded the Jury Prize at Cannes, Iran’s culture advisor, Mehdi Kalhor, called it a gesture of “Islamophobia.”

The film succeeds in making this political Persian story approachable and universal. The film’s directors changed the books’ narrative structure while visually trying to achieve “stylized realism.” Satrapi’s dark and abstract silhouettes create a kind of powerful expressionism on screen: after the disappearance of her loved ones, Marji’s world is full of shadows.

—CLÉMENTINE GALLOT

reader comments

Continued from Page 2

Responses to “Bringing the War on Terrorism Home,” cont.

Any person who attempts to defend the environment (or most any issue of justice these days), even through nonviolent means, is a terrorist by this administration’s language. Obstruction is a terrorist act. Including the civilian obstruction of unlawful corporate and government acts. Calling a boycott could be interpreted as a “terrorist” act. When are we going to stand up and say enough is enough?

—AMBER

Why do we have these supposed experts testifying on this topic? Who are they? There is a cottage industry in academia on various user behaviors on the Internet. After reading some of the nonsense, I wondered, which Internet are they using? But these publications are a convenient cover to deputize the expertise Congress needs to justify voting 404 to 6 for this odd and dangerous legislation. The attack on the 911 Truthers is also of interest. Never mind the Klan, the skinheads and other self-professed hate groups. They went after those who challenge official explanations of the fall of the towers.

—MICHAEL COLLINS

Thank you, *Indy* and commentors, for paying such good attention to this matter. It’s helpful to know that the American public will not go gently into that

dark night of the soul envisioned for it by people who demonstrably cannot be trusted with power.

—EXPATRIATE PATRIOT

YES, EXACTLY
Response to “Protesting Priests Penned,” Nov. 16

These “Catholic” protesters have a subversive goal. They oppose the role of the military in general. Their vision of peace has nothing to do with its true Catholic meaning. In their skewed outlook, the military is a symbol of oppression that must be eliminated, forcing all states to renounce the use of force to secure their rights and maintain order. This pacifist mentality harbors a profound dislike for the discipline, order, hierarchy, sense of duty and other values that are part and parcel of military life.

—CHRISTINE

LOCKING DOWN SCHOOLS
Responses to “Students Give School Big Brother Bronx Cheer,” Nov. 16

In creative writing class, I once wrote a poem entirely of swear words and naughty words like “penis” and “douche bag.” All I got was a talk outside of class about how “I was better than that.” Now I write about sex all the time. I wonder what would have happened to me if I was in the NYC school system. Scary to think about. Kids should be nurtured; they are fragile. Sending them to school in prison-like conditions can really mess with them.

—DBW

GIVE DIRECTLY TO ACHOLI PEOPLE
Response to “Dance Away the Specter of War,” Nov. 16

War Dance is bringing the filmmaker fame and millions of dollars. You say half of the ticket price is going to nongovernmental organizations. The filmmakers’ primary motivation is to make names for themselves and money. Why not give 50 percent of the ticket price to the local Acholi government for helping Acholi people directly? They need houses, money for health care, education and clean water and to restart food production. We argue for the filmmakers to do what is economically, morally and spiritually just and fare; i.e., give 50 percent of proceeds directly to Acholiland via Acholi Tribal Chiefs. Acholi tribal government wants to start a treasury to help its people directly. Funds directed through NGOs or Kampala government hardly ever reach people because of mismanagement and corruption. Thank you.

—R.KIDEN

DIFFERENT PLACE, SAME EXPLOITATION
Response to “PPP vs. People,” Oct. 29

It’s really everywhere ... in some places it’s large dams; in other places it’s an open pit coal mine or special economic zones for TNCs [Trans-National Corporations]. In the end it’s all about taking away the natural resources from communities.

—ZAKIR KIBRIA

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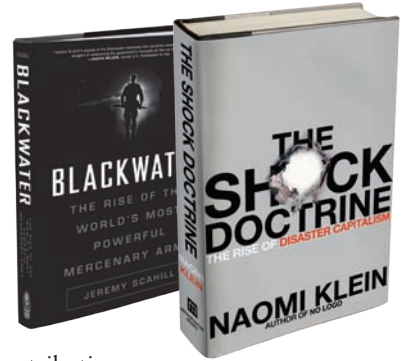
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